

# ***Health Care Legislative Monitor***

***Congressman Jim Nussle***

***Manchester, Iowa***

Summer 2003

## ***Jim Nussle's Agenda for Iowa...***

***Protect our  
Nation with  
Homeland Security***

***Strengthen the  
Family Farm***

***Fair Taxation &  
Responsible Budgets***

***Long-term  
Energy Strategies***

***Retirement Security  
for All Iowans***

***Modernize  
Medicare &  
Ensure Health  
Care Access***

***Student-centered  
Education with  
Local Control***

***Keep Promises Made  
to Our Nation's  
Veterans***

***Grow Our Economy  
to Create Jobs***

## **Nussle Agenda to Improve Health Care in Iowa** *Modernize Medicare with Prescription Drugs*

*"Medicare is one of the most important benefits that Iowa seniors rely on. Unfortunately, Medicare cannot meet the needs of seniors if it isn't modernized to meet the increasing reliance on prescription drugs for disease control and prevention. Medicare must include a prescription drug benefit and must be modernized to ensure that good quality health care continues to be available in the rural and under-served areas of Iowa."*

**Jim Nussle**

**Jim has worked on Iowa's health care priorities since coming to Congress and will continue to work on these priorities in the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress.**

**Jim is working to achieve a positive legislative agenda for health care for Iowans. After countless meetings with Iowans, as well as through letters, e-mails and phone calls, he has created the following goals.**

### **Health Care Improvement Goals:**

1. Modernize Medicare
2. Provide Prescription Drug Coverage
3. Provide Fair Medicare Reimbursements to Rural and Under-served Areas
4. Attract Providers and Professionals to Rural and Under-served Areas
5. Promote Prevention
6. Meet the New Health Challenges of the Aging Population

**In order to achieve the goals to help modernize Medicare with prescription drugs, Jim has sponsored and co-sponsored many pieces of legislation, and as the House Budget Committee Chairman, he has written many health care items into his budget.**

***[www.nussle.house.gov](http://www.nussle.house.gov)***

***[nussleia@mail.house.gov](mailto:nussleia@mail.house.gov)***

## **Nussle's Health Care Agenda Legislation:**

### **FY2004 Budget Resolution (H.Con. Res. 95)**

- Provides **\$400 billion to strengthen the Medicare** program with prescription drugs.
- *Constructed by Rep. Nussle, as chairman of the House Budget Committee. Approved by the House of Representatives and the Senate on April 11, 2003.*

### **Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act (H.R. 1)**

#### **Including Nussle Iowa Provisions**

- Provides more fair reimbursement for Iowa's hospitals by revising the calculation of labor costs.
- Promotes increased access to care by providing a 5% bonus payment to primary and specialty care physicians in rural areas.
- Provides affordable, voluntary prescription drug coverage for seniors.
- Equity for rural and small urban area hospital base payments.
- Predictable reimbursements for physician services.
- Adds a 5% increase for all rural home health agencies until 2005.
- Provides flexibility for Critical Access Hospitals.
- Increases payment for emergency ambulance transportation trips of more than 50 miles.
- Provides for an increase of physician reimbursements in rural states for 2004 and 2005.
- *H.R. 1 was approved by the House of Representatives on June 27, 2003. The Senate approved similar legislation on June 27, 2003. A conference committee is now pending.*

### **Stabilized Medicare Physician Payments and Equity for Rural and Small Urban Hospitals (H.J. Res. 2)**

- Equalizes rural and small urban hospital base payments for 2003.
- Eliminates the pending cut in physician payments and provides stability for future payments.
- *Approved by Congress on February 13, 2003. Signed into law by the President on March 20, 2003.*

### **Rural Health Care Coalition (RHCC)**

- Past Chairman, Steering Committee; Co-chair of the RHCC working group on beneficiary issues/access to health insurance.

#### **Access to Care**

### **HEALTH Act (H.R. 5)**

- Reforms the health care liability system enabling physicians to provide patient access to care.
- *Cosponsored by Rep. Nussle. Approved by the House of Representatives on March 13, 2003.*

### **The Bipartisan Patient Protection Act (H.R. 2563)**

- Makes health care more accessible, holds HMOs accountable, and adds important new patients' rights.
- *Approved by the House of Representatives on August 2, 2001. The Senate failed to take action prior to adjournment.*

**Health Care Provider Assistance**

**Medicare Regulatory and Contracting Reform Act (H.R. 810)**

- Streamlines the regulatory process and enhances education and assistance for health care providers.
- Reduces complex paperwork that burdens both doctors and seniors.
- *Co-sponsored by Rep. Nussle. Approved by the House Committee on Ways and Means on April 2, 2003.*

**Health and Higher Education Facilities Improvement Act of 2001 (H.R. 661)**

- Bank deductibility bill to provide non-profits with more options to finance bond debt.
- *Introduced by Rep. Nussle.*

**HIPAA Administration Simplification Regulations Extension (H.R. 1975)**

- Extends from October 16, 2002 to October 2004, the deadline for all health providers and professionals to comply with the uniformed codes required under HIPAA.
- *Co-sponsored by Rep. Nussle. Included in H.R. 3323, the Administration Simplification Act, approved by the House on December 12, 2001. Signed into law by the President on December 27, 2001.*

**Health Care Access Improvement Act (H.R. 2449)**

- Provides a tax credit to primary health providers who establish practices in health professional shortage areas.
- *Introduced by Rep. Nussle.*

**American Hospital Preservation Act (H.R.. 1556)**

- Increases the amount of payment for inpatient hospital services under the Medicare Program.
- *Co-sponsored by Rep. Nussle.*
- *Provisions of H.R. 1556 were included in H.R. 4954, the Medicare Modernization and Prescription Drug Act, as approved by the House of Representatives on June 28, 2002.*

**National Standardized Payment for Inpatient Hospitals (H.R. 1609)**

- Establishes a floor for the Medicare wage index.
- Makes hospital base payments in all areas equal to that of large urban hospitals (standardized amount).
- *Co-sponsored by Rep. Nussle.*
- *The standardized amount provision was included in H.R. 4954, the Medicare Modernization and Prescription Drug Act, as approved by the House of Representatives on June 28, 2002.*

**Rural Equity Payment Index Reform Act (H.R. 3569)**

- Would establish a minimum geographic cost-of-practice index value for physicians in rural areas.
- *Co-sponsored by Rep. Nussle. Provisions of H.R. 3569 were included in H.R. 4954, the Medicare Modernization and Prescription Drug Act, as approved by the House of Representatives on June 28, 2002.*